



SUMMER 2014 WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 12:00 MIDNIGHT IN WASHINGTON, DC, MONDAY JANUARY 27, 2014

We recommend printing these instructions and referring to them while completing the application.

Thank you for your interest in the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the new flagship program of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). President Obama launched YALI in 2010 to support young African leaders as they spur growth and prosperity, strengthen democratic governance, and enhance peace and security across Africa. Please visit youngafricanleaders.state.gov for more information. The Washington Fellowship, which begins in 2014, will bring 500 young leaders to the United States each year for academic coursework and leadership training and will create unique opportunities in Africa for Fellows to put new skills to practical use in leading organizations, communities, and countries. The Washington Fellowship includes:

- **A 6-week Academic and Leadership Institute:** Fellows are placed at U.S. colleges and universities for academic institutes. Institutes will focus on skills development in one of three areas: **Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, or Public Management.** Institutes will take place from mid-June to late July 2014.
- **A Summit with President Obama in Washington, DC:** At the conclusion of the academic and leadership institute, all Fellows will participate in a Presidential Summit. The Summit will take place in late July 2014.
- **An optional 8-week U.S. Internship:** As part of the Fellowship application, individuals may apply to receive practical training at a U.S. business, civil society organization, or public agency in the United States. Approximately 100 Washington Fellows will be selected for U.S.-based internships. The U.S. internships will take place in August and September 2014.
- **Activities in Africa:** Fellows will have the opportunity for continued networking opportunities, ongoing professional development, access to seed funding, and community service activities upon their return home after the Fellowship.

The Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is a program of the U.S. government and supported in its implementation by IREX.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

There is no fee to apply to the Washington Fellowship. If you are selected, the U.S. government will cover all participant costs.

Financial provisions provided by the U.S. Government will include:

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from fellow's home city to the U.S. and other required travel;
- Customized academic and leadership institute;
- Concluding Presidential Summit in Washington, DC;
- Accident and sickness benefit plan;
- Housing and meals; and
- A potential eight-week internship at the conclusion of the academic and leadership institute (optional, and competitive for approximately 100 slots).

Please note that housing will be typically be in university dorms or similar accommodations. Fellows will be expected to share a room and bathroom with another fellow of the same gender. Most meals will be provided at campus cafeterias or restaurants, though participants may have access to a kitchen to cook some meals on their own. It is important that applicants are aware of these arrangements and that they are comfortable with such accommodations. To the extent possible, care will be taken to ensure that any special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, housing, and medical care are satisfied.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All qualified applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Competition for the Washington Fellowship is merit-based and open to young African leaders who meet the following criteria¹:

- Are between the ages of 25 and 35 at the time of application submission, although exceptional applicants younger than 25 will be considered;
- Are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S.;
- Are eligible to receive a United States J-1 visa;
- Are proficient in reading, writing, and speaking English; and
- Are citizens and residents of one of the following countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Individuals residing in the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Sudan, and Zimbabwe may not apply to the public management track. Residents of Sudan may only apply for the Civic Leadership track.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee. If you do not meet the technical eligibility requirements for this program, we invite you to visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/non-us> for information on other U.S. Department of State exchange opportunities.

WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS TIMELINE

¹ Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-implemented grant programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant.

January 27, 2014	Application deadline
February-March 2014	Semifinalists interviewed by local U.S. embassies and consulates
April 2014	Applicants are notified of their status
May 2014	Visa processing for finalists
Mid-June 2014	Fellowship starts in the United States

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The Washington Fellowship is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a selection panel. Chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed by the U.S. embassies or consulates in their home country. If advanced to the semi-finalist round, applicants must provide a copy of their international passport (if available) or other government-issued photo identification at the time of the interview.

Selection panels will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- A proven record of leadership and accomplishment in public service, business and entrepreneurship, or civic engagement;
- A demonstrated commitment to public or community service, volunteerism, or mentorship;
- The ability to work cooperatively in diverse groups and respect the opinions of others;
- Strong social and communication skills;
- An energetic, positive attitude;
- A demonstrated knowledge, interest, and professional experience in the sector/track selected; and
- A commitment to return to Africa and apply leadership skills and training to benefit the applicant's country and/or community after they return home.

GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS

- The Washington Fellowship uses an Internet-based application system. You will need access to a computer and the Internet to apply.
- You do not have to finish your application in one session. You may save your work and return to complete your application as many times as necessary. You must, however, submit your completed application by the deadline.
- Answer all questions on the application in English.
- Spaces marked with a red asterisk (*) must be completed.
- All answers in the application including written responses to personal statements and optional internship questions must be your own, original work.
- You may wish to review the application and its questions before filling in the application. Some applicants find it helpful to create their responses offline (in a separate Word document for example) and then cut and paste their responses into the appropriate sections of the application.
- This is the official application for the Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. Only those applicants who complete this application will be considered. Applications and information submitted through email or other means will not be considered.

ONLINE APPLICATION SECTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Provide your legal name as spelled on your passport or national identification card.
- Date of birth: please provide your date of birth using month, day, year. You will be required to provide documentation verifying age and for eligibility at the interview stage, if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Please provide your country of citizenship and your country of residence. You will be required to provide documentation verifying citizenship at the interview stage, if you are selected as a semi-finalist.
- Please indicate your marital status (single or married).

- Please provide the citizenship of your spouse.
- Please provide your place of birth (city or town and country).
- Please indicate whether or not you have a passport, and provide the document's expiration date. If you indicate that you do have a passport, you will be required to present it at the interview stage in you are selected as a semi-finalist.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- The contact information you provide will be used to reach you during the application and selection process. Please provide accurate addresses, phone numbers and emails that you use and check on a regular basis.

ACADEMIC INSTITUTE TRACKS: DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

There are three tracks to choose from for the Washington Fellowship: Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Leadership, and Public Management. Participants may only participate in *one* of the academic institute tracks. For this section, applicants need only rank their tracks of interest. Descriptions of the tracks are below.

Definitions:

- **Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes:** Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will cater to the range of aspiring entrepreneurs who hope to take on leadership roles within the private sector or start their own business ventures on the continent. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will expose participants to business and entrepreneurial approaches in the United States, including those that are employed to address social issues. Business and Entrepreneurship Institutes will also build technical and leadership capacity in areas such as strategy, operations, supply chain management, business ethics, social entrepreneurship, microfinance, organizational development and management, marketing, innovation and technology, emerging markets and risk analysis, strategic business planning, and corporate social responsibility.
- **Civic Leadership Institutes:** Civic Leadership Institutes will be oriented to young Africans who are civically engaged and serving the public through non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, or volunteerism. Civic Leadership Institutes will expose participants to the meaning of civic leadership in the United States, while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as citizenship, community building, economic development, grassroots activism, political organizing and leadership, and volunteerism. In order to define the content of the Institute and enhance the academic experience, programs may focus on a specific theme or sub-themes such as organizational management, strategic planning, fundraising, community relations and outreach, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, media, and coalition-building.
- **Public Management Institutes:** Public Management Institutes will be tailored to young Africans who work or aspire to work in all levels of government agencies, regional organizations such as the African Union, international organizations such as the United Nations, or other publicly-minded organizations or think tanks. Public Management Institutes will expose participants to U.S. public management models and best practices, while building technical and leadership capacity in areas such as transparency, procurement, public financial management, government tender processes, legislative/executive collaboration, citizen engagement and outreach, human resource management, program implementation, and policy formulation.

Instructions:

- Please rank the sector/tracks in order of preference. Each sector/track may only be selected once, i.e., only one sector/track can be ranked number one.
- Please choose the sector/track which most closely aligns with your daily work, education or community involvement. If you are not interested in a track, you may leave it blank and you will NOT be considered for participation in that track.

CURRENT PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- This section asks for information about where you are currently working or studying.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

- This section has three essay questions that must be completed. Each response has a space limitation for writing (250 words maximum.) Your responses will give the selection committee an opportunity to better understand you as a leader and your desire to participate in the program.
- The questions are: 1.) Please explain how you have helped to introduce a new idea, initiative or product and how you attracted support for it. 2.) Please describe a specific challenge in your community, organization, industry, or country. Include what you believe to be the key barriers to resolving this challenge. 3.) Taking the challenge you described above, please describe the steps you would like to take to address this challenge. Please explain the skills and resources that you possess as well as those that you would need to acquire in order to effectively address this challenge.

MENTOR PLEDGE

- If selected for the Washington Fellowship, you are asked to share your experiences and knowledge gained on the program with other young African leaders. Mentoring is one way to share forward the experience of the Washington Fellowship with your home community. Opportunities to serve your community will be a key part of the Africa-based activities. The leadership training in the United States will include training on mentoring that will help Fellows design a locally appropriate mentoring plan.

OPTIONAL U.S. INTERNSHIP

- As described above the internship component of the program is optional and competitive. You do not have to apply for the internship component in order to be considered for the Washington Fellowship. If you are selected as a Fellow, you will also have an opportunity at a later date to apply for Africa-based internships.
- To apply for the optional U.S. internship you will be required to answer two questions. Each response has a space limitation for writing (250 words maximum.) 1.) In what kind of work environment do you thrive? 2.) How would participating in the internship impact your work and long term career goals?

PREVIOUS U.S. EXPERIENCE

- Please provide accurate information regarding your travel to the U.S. – including prior travel or upcoming travel.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- English language proficiency is required for participation in the program. All activities will be in English, including academic sessions, discussions, meetings, cultural activities, and social interactions. Please fill in the chart evaluating your language skills as accurately as possible.

RESUME

- **In addition to the completed program application, applicants must upload a separate resume (CV) with their online application.** The resume is a key component of your application. Please use the **approved resume template** for the Washington Fellowship which can be found at: <http://www.irex.org/applyyali>. A sample resume for your reference also can be found there. The document can be attached in .DOC or .PDF format and must be no larger than 25mbs. Please do not include any high resolution images in your resume attachment. Please limit your resume to a maximum of three pages.

OPTIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS

- In this section we invite you to upload up to three files that you feel will strengthen your application. These materials are entirely optional and must be in English. Documents can be attached in .DOC or

.PDF format and must be no larger than 25mb. Recommendation letters are examples of supplemental files.

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

- The questions in this section are optional.
- This section asks for information about how you learned about the Washington Fellowship and whether or not you will require any assistance or accommodation due to a disability or special need.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for applications for the Washington Fellowship is 12:00 Midnight in Washington, DC, MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2014. Applications must be completed online at <https://yaliapp.irex.org>.

ABOUT THE BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State fosters mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries around the world. ECA does this through a wide range of international exchanges including the Washington Fellowship. ECA works in close cooperation with U.S. Embassies overseas to promote personal, professional, and institutional ties between private citizens and organizations in the United States and abroad. For further information go to: <http://exchanges.state.gov>

ABOUT IREX

IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing thoughtful leadership and innovative programs to promote positive lasting change globally. We enable local individuals and institutions to build key elements of a vibrant society: quality education, independent media, and strong communities. To strengthen these sectors, our program activities also include conflict resolution, technology for development, gender, and youth. Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of over \$70 million and a staff of over 400 professionals worldwide. IREX employs field-tested methods and innovative uses of technologies to develop practical and locally-driven solutions with our partners in more than 100 countries.